

## Preface Revised BCTD

~~Why is it that as we approach our goals they seem to be more difficult to achieve? Why is it that things progressing so well seem sooner or later to turn sour? And when things turn sour, how is it that they seem to do so in such a rapid fashion?~~

~~As we approach our goals, why do they seem to be more difficult to achieve? When things are progressing well, why do they seem to turn sour? Why is it that almost every problem we solve seems simply to lead to a whole new set of problems? Why is it that the problems we thought we solved yesterday seem to come back to haunt us in a few weeks or months? Why is it that a group of individuals, each doing what seems so sensible, manages to create something that none of them want, i.e. bureaucracy? Why is it that we are never satisfied no matter how much money one we makes it never seems to be enough? Why is it that do cooperative partnerships that should produce tremendous results so often end with the partners becoming adversaries?~~

~~The list of questions is rather endless and our normal pursuit from a cause and effect perspective is to try to find where the fault lies and who to blame. It is more appropriate to realize that people always, always, always do exactly what makes the most amount of sense to them in the context of the moment based on their current understanding. Thus, our actions are based on our beliefs and the future is a result of our actions though many of our beliefs are based on incorrect assumptions and conclusions. What implications do you think this has for our future? It has been said that the majority of today's problems are the direct result of yesterday's solutions. There is a famous quote from Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us" And Steven Covey commented that true pro activity begins when one starts to understand the extent to which they contribute to the situation. All of this should provide a sense that if we want things to be better tomorrow we need to get better, though what does that mean?~~

~~Whether we're considering a problem, a situation, an objective, or a desire, the underlying essence of the manner in which we proceed is the essentially the same. We take action intended to change what is into what we think it should be, though the results are typically as described in the first paragraph. Might the typical results imply that we could use a better way?~~

~~A systems perspective enables us to understand the foundation of situations. A systems perspective enables one to progress beyond simply seeing cause and effect events, to seeing patterns of interaction and the underlying structures which are responsible for the patterns and events. And once we understand the real foundations for the situations we experience, we are in a much better position to respond. Respond in a manner where we interact with the underlying structure in ways which will enhance or improve the situation without making the situation worse or creating new problems elsewhere.~~

The endless list of questions comes from our self-centered pursuit of trying to find what was at fault and who to blame. Based on a person's understanding in the moment, they do what makes sense to them. Our actions in the present are based on our values and beliefs even though we made incorrect assumptions and jumped to biased conclusions. What implications does this have for our future?

Everything we do has a cause and effect relationship. Solutions have unintended consequences and the effect starts the cycle all over again of trying to find a solution to a new problem. There is the famous quote from Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us," In writing about this basic principle, Viktor Frankl detailed the first and most basic habit of highly effective people in any environment—the habit of proactivity. If we want things to be better tomorrow, we need to better ourselves, but how do we do that?

The process is the same whether we are considering a problem, an issue, a situation, an objective or a craving. We take an action intended to change things, but then we have deal with the unintended consequences that create a new problem, issue or situation. Then we start asking the types of questions in the first paragraph above. Maybe there is a better way.

Pursuing cause and effect doesn't work unless we take a broad, systems perspective to understand the foundation of the situation. The process of going beyond simple cause and effect starts us on the path to gaining insight into why systems behave the way they do. Following the hidden thread through cause and effect into a feedback loop reveals the underlying structure responsible for the patterns and events we experience. We position ourselves to respond in a way that interacts with the feedback loops in a system to improve the situation and gain insight into possible unintended consequences.

## Figure 1. The Future We Create

- | Given a situation that we consider warrants attention, we first need to develop an understanding. An understanding of events, patterns of behavior and underlying
- | structure. An understanding that will lead to developing ~~enable us to develop~~ a strategy
- | ~~which that~~ improves the situation while minimizing unintended consequences. Our
- | desire to minimize unintended consequences is based on experience ~~which has shown~~
- | that unintended consequences typically make the initial situation worse, or end up
- | creating new problems that we ourselves, or others, have to figure out how to deal with.
- | A well crafted ~~strategy, and~~ well executed ~~strategy,~~, can serve to minimize unintended consequences. As the total elimination of unintended consequences is likely to be impossible a well crafted strategy should also contain provisions for identifying and dealing with unintended consequences in the future.

- | Over time we have woven the fabric of our existence ever tighter, and with ever more rapid interactions. ~~And, w~~ When we do not understand the complexity we have created,

| we feel helpless, and become victims of what we do not understand. ~~It is our~~ We hope  
| ~~that~~ Beyond Connecting the Dots enables ~~all of~~ us to develop a better understanding of  
| the world around us, ~~understand~~ why this ~~understanding~~ is so important ~~to us~~ in our  
daily lives, and how we can all can benefit from the understanding. Once we embrace  
the complexity we have created, and develop a systems perspective, we no longer need  
to be victims, for we can use our understanding to change our actions and thereby our  
future.